



FIFTY GOLDEN YEARS

Commemorating the
50th Anniversary
of the founding
of
St. Mary's Church
Grayson, Saskatchewan
Canada







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*His Holiness Pope Pius XII has graciously granted
his apostolic blessing to the pastor and parishioners
of Saint Mary's Parish, Grayson, Saskatchewan*



Most Holy Father

the Pastor Rev. D. Heberberg

on the occasion of 50th Anniversary of the Foundation
of the Parish of St. Mary's Grayson Saskatchewan,
humbly prostrate at the feet of your Holiness beg a special

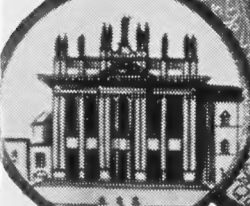
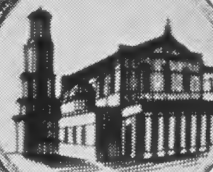
Apostolic Benediction

for himself and his Parishoners, on June 30, 1959.

*Quis novus, beatus, et misericors, et
Datus in Adibitibus, die 30 Junii 1959*

+ D. Heberberg

Archiep. Hauer



March 30, 1957.

Rev. B. Ueberberg, O.M.I.,
Grayson, Sask.

Dear Father Ueberberg:

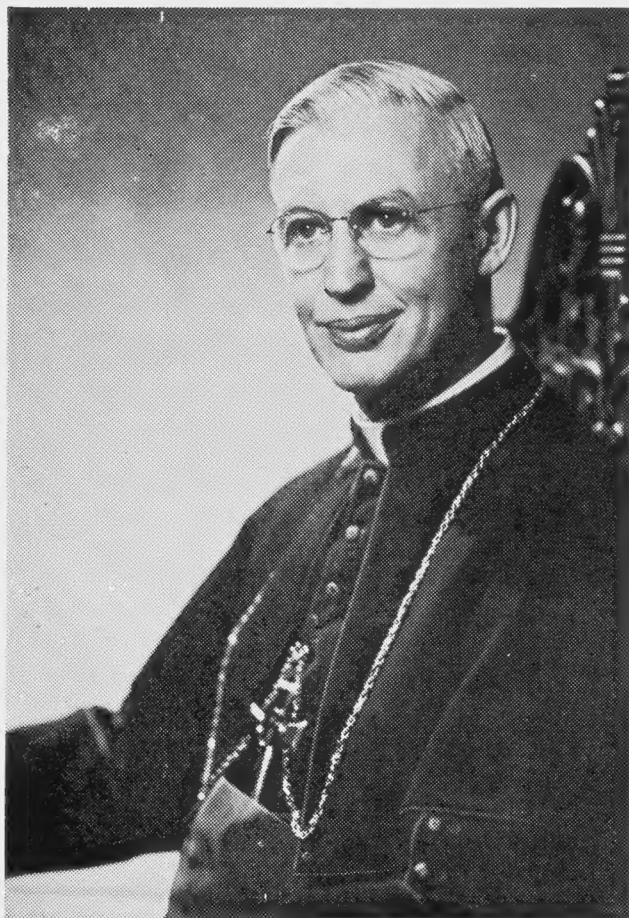
The Golden Jubilee of the Parish of Our Lady of Good Help, Grayson, is an occasion that calls for rejoicing. It spells out fifty years of blessings that a loving Father has bestowed upon faithful children.

Coming into a strange land with strange customs, the original members of this parish spared no effort and thought no sacrifice too great to provide a suitable dwelling place for God. In so doing, they knew that although far from their homeland they were still at home with God. Their children have followed their example and the twin spires of Grayson Church tell to all the story of a strong Catholic faith and practice.

In extending my heartiest congratulations to you and your parishioners I must pay tribute to the pioneers whose sacrifices and generosity prepared the way for the present generation. Nor can I overlook the priestly ministry of the Oblate Fathers whose devotion and zeal over these years has been responsible for the development of a parish and spirit that is second to none. In this work they have been ably helped by the Ursuline Sisters and other teachers who have provided for the Catholic education of the children. My prayerful wish is that this Jubilee may be a source of many blessings to Pastor, Sisters and parishioners and may those who have faithfully served their God over the span of fifty years have their names written in His golden records.

† M. C. O'Neill

Archbishop of Regina



Most Reverend Michael C. O'Neill, D.D.
Archbishop of Regina

Foreward

**A message to my parishioners on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee
of St. Mary's parish of Grayson.**

Dear Friends:

The most important thing for us to do on this Jubilee day is to unite in prayer to give thanks to the eternal Father in heaven for the many blessings we have received from Him during the past half century. 1907 to 1957 were indeed 50 Golden Years. Thanks are due also to the zealous priests and pioneers who laid the foundation of the parish and developed it. The majority of them went to their eternal reward and I am convinced their spirits are rejoicing with us today.

In compiling this Jubilee Souvenir booklet a greater portion of space has been devoted to the earlier days. They have the air of adventure, while later happenings are more or less taken as a matter of course. All historical facts were taken from "Golden Memories of Grayson", marvelously compiled by the Ursuline Sisters. We are very grateful to the Reverend Sisters for allowing us to copy them.

I first heard of Grayson in 1912 in Regina when the Oblate Fathers stationed at Grayson came there to make their monthly retreat. The vivid description of the hardships of their missionary life, the poverty, travelling inconveniences, inclement weather conditions etc. made such a deep impression on me that I prayed one morning: Lord send me anywhere but not to Grayson. It was a foolish prayer of a young inexperienced priest who had arrived just a short while ago from Europe.

I first saw Grayson soon after my appointment as Provincial of the new St. Mary's Province of the Oblate Fathers of which the Grayson District forms an important part. It was in 1926, when I sent Father Julius Seltsmann O.M.I. to Grayson as parish priest with the instruction to replace the small parish church with a new and larger one. I knew Father Seltsmann was the right man to do that difficult work.

I actually came to live among you in Grayson when my Superiors appointed me pastor of your parish in September 1941. Besides my priestly faculties I brought with me a whole bagful of goodness. I had only one intention: to improve if possible, your spiritual happiness and also the economical condition. During the first pastoral visit I noticed



Rev. Bernard Ueberberg, O.M.I., Pastor

that many of you were very poor. Your farms were covered with heavy mortgages and only a few were owners of the land. I encouraged you to place all your trust in divine providence, confidence in the Mother of Christ and St. Joseph. God blessed us with very good crops and spiritual gifts to such an extent that we were able to improve the parish and make it second to none in the Archdiocese of Regina. Holy Communion increased from 6,000 to over 30,000. Thirteen years I have now spent among you as your pastor, part of the best years of my life. Your good will and cooperation have made these years very happy ones and on the occasion of this Jubilee I wish to extend to you my sincerest thanks. Sincere thanks also to the Reverend Ursuline Sisters. Without their help I could not have accomplished my work.

Now I am aging, but I hope and pray that God may grant me health and strength to serve you as pastor for a few more years.

Yours very devotedly in Christ and Mary Immaculate

B. Ueberberg, O.M.I.



St. Mary's Church, Grayson, Saskatchewan

PART ONE

Spiritual Growth

*"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His Justice,
and all these things shall be added unto you."*

Our ancestors were men and women of heroic mould, of industry and of sacrifice, but above all they were men and women of faith — the foundation of the whole spiritual structure. That "Faith of Our Fathers known of old" had struck ineradicable roots in their hearts, and was bound to be transplanted into the virgin soil for their new Canadian homes. "To give to God the things that are God's" — this was ever their motto, the guiding principle of their lives. What a sacrifice it must have been for them then to have had to forego these spiritual consolations for want of Ministers of God, and a suitable dwelling place for Him! It is to their credit that they dotted the western prairies with beautiful churches and fervent communities. The pioneers of the Grayson district were no exception.

BEGINNINGS

The first church to be built in the Grayson district was at Mariahilf, and thither the devout pioneers journeyed by stoneboat, ox-cart, wagon, or, lacking these conveyances, on foot, to worship the God of their hearts in His holy shrine. That was in the days before the railroad — when there was no Grayson, no Killaly, no Neudorf. The entire area was then under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of St. Boniface, since the Archdiocese of Regina had not yet been founded. Back in 1900 it was ministered to by a secular priest, Reverend Father Holzhaecker, better known as Father Woodcutter, then the Parish Priest of Kaposvar, who visited the area about once a month to bring God into the midst of this widely scattered flock. Other Representatives of Christ who served the needs of our people about the turn of the century were Reverend Fathers Bresson, Albert Kulawy, O.M.I., and August Suffa, O.M.I.

GRAYSON CHOSEN AS CENTRE

In March, 1905, Rev. Father P. Magnan, O.M.I., Vicar of Missions, proposed the erection of a centre from which Mariahilf and other missions north of the Qu'Appelle Valley could be administered. As the village of Grayson seemed almost centrally located, steps were taken to secure an appropriate site in the village, and in the fall of 1905 twenty acres were purchased from the Canadian Pacific Railway Company for the purpose of building the "Mission of Mariahilf". During the first half of 1906 plans for a church and rectory were designed, the necessary authorization obtained, and a building fund established. With the first week of August, 1906, building operations began, and the first day of May, 1907, dawned bright and clear on the new mission at Grayson. On May 2, 1907, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate took formal possession of the house, and on that day, the feast of St. Athanasius, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was celebrated for the first time in the new "Mission of Mariahilf", Grayson.

St. Mary's, the first church at Grayson, was a frame building, 40' by 60'. The contractor was Mr. Fouly. It was heated by furnace installed in the part-basement. The building cost approximately \$5,000.00 To secure the necessary funds a loan of \$4,000 was made. This loan was paid in full by 1918. Rev. M. J. Kasper, O.M.I., was the first resident Parish Priest at St. Mary's ("Mariahilf"). The first Church Trustees were Mr. Mathias Gelowitz, Mr. John Stepan, and Mr. Frank D. Flegel. Mr. George Lepinski was the first organist.



Rev. M. J. Kasper, O.M.I.
 Pastor — 1902-1911



Rev. E. Hess, O.M.I.
 Pastor — 1911-1915

The Fathers constituting the new Community at Grayson were the Rev. Father M. J. Kasper, O.M.I., Superior, and Rev. Father Johann Schulte, O.M.I. The following day, May 3, they were joined by Rev. Father Philip Funke, O.M.I. Rev. Father Kasper was placed in charge of Mariahilf mission, south of Killaly, and Crooked Lake missions, while Father Schulte was destined for the missions at Lemberg and Dysart, and Father Funke for Killaly and Wolfsheim. July 1, 1907, was a happy day for the young community, as it was the day on which Rev. Father Provincial, P. Magnan, O.M.I., paid them his first visit. Though he departed the very next day, it gave them genuine pleasure to have had his person in their midst.

July 18, 1907, marked the first pastoral visit. His Grace, L. A. Langevin, arrived by train from Winnipeg, accompanied by his youthful and gentlemanly secretary, Joseph Poitras, and Rev. F. Kowalski, O.M.I. Immediately after supper all these visitors left for Crooked Lake Mission, about ten miles south from here, in order to assist at the closing exercises of the annual retreat, which was preached to the good Sisters of St. Joseph (Motherhouse, St. Hyacinthe, P.Q.) by Rev. Father Zacharias Lacasse, O.M.I.

July 21, 1907, the Feast of the Most Holy Redeemer, witnessed the solemn blessing of the new Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, built at Grayson by Rev. Father Kasper, O.M.I. The church property had been bought by the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate who were in charge of Mariahilf (Holy Name of Jesus),

Lemberg (St. Michael), Killaly (St. Elizabeth), and of the surrounding colonies of Germans from Austria. After High Mass the Sacrament of Confirmation was administered, followed by the Archbishop's exhortations to the people concerning the education of their children in Catholic schools and institutes, their obligations towards the Church and Priest, their duties in the social and political order as Catholic citizens and the importance of supporting the Catholic Press.

On June 19, 1911, Rev. Father E. Hess, O.M.I., was appointed Superior of the house at Grayson, Rev. Father M. J. Kasper having been named Parish Priest of Melville, Saskatchewan. Rev. Father Kasper was the founder of the house at Grayson and for six years had been the director of the community. When Rev. Father Hess was nominated Superior, he received as assistants: Rev. Father Leo Gabriel, first assistant, and Rev. Father Joseph Riedinger, second assistant. Other members of the community were Rev. Fathers Philip Funke and Theo. Joerissen. In August of the same year Father Funke was recalled to Regina, and the community was thus reduced to four.

A FAR-FLUNG MISSION TERRITORY

The missionary and pastoral work entrusted to the Community of Grayson was divided among the Fathers in such a way as to give each a full share of the plentiful work in the harvest field of our Lord. The following will give us some idea of their far-flung mission field:



Rev. J. Riedinger, O.M.I.
Pastor — 1915-1919



Rev. F. X. Rapp, O.M.I.
Pastor — 1919, 1920-1925



Rev. F. Plischke, O.M.I.
Pastor — 1919-1920



Rev. J. Schnerch, O.M.I.
Pastor — 1925-1926

Rev. Father Hess was Parish Priest of the colony of Mariahilf, alternating between Grayson and Killaly for Sunday services, and having the assistance of one of the other Fathers for the chapel of the Holy Name of Jesus once a month.

Rev. Father Gabriel was entrusted with the care of Lemberg and Southey, alternating between the two places for Sunday services. Father Gabriel also visited Earl Grey whenever his services were required by the Catholic residents of that colony. All told, Father Gabriel looked after the spiritual wants of about ninety families. Rev. Joseph Riedinger visited the colony of Kronsberg twice a month, giving the other two Sundays of the month to Dysart and Holy Name of Jesus alternately. Kronsberg was a colony of about 70 families, and Dysart may have numbered 20 families. There was also a goodly number of Ruthenians to the north of Dysart within five or six miles of the Church. But these people never or hardly ever frequented the Dysart Church.

Once a month Rev. Theo. Joerissen visited Govan, an English settlement, where there were about 20 Catholic families in close proximity. Once a month he served Cupar, about 15 Catholic families, most of them of Irish descent. Besides these two missions, Father Joerissen once a month visited Strasbourg, where there were about 20 families scattered in the country within six to ten miles; now and then he also served Bulyea (but mostly on week days), where there were a few straggling Catholics.

On May 1, 1912, His Lordship,

Rt. Reverend Archbishop O.E. Mathieu, the first bishop of the new diocese of Regina, arrived at Grayson to confer the Sacrament of Confirmation on 180 children of the parish of Mariahilf. On this and subsequent visits His Grace was almost lavish in his praise and commendation of the fervor and Catholicity manifested on all sides.

Grayson lost a friend and counsellor when, on Sept. 12, 1912, Rev. Father Riedinger left to take up his duties as assistant and treasurer of St. Joseph's, Winnipeg. His post was filled by Rev. Father F. X. Rapp, O.M.I. About the middle of October, 1913, Father Rapp had to be relieved of his missionary labors to spend some time at a sanatorium. During this short interval his spiritual duties were discharged by Rev. Father Grochowski from Holy Ghost Parish, Winnipeg.



Rev. J. Seltmann, O.M.I.
Pastor — 1926-1936

URSULINE SISTERS FOR GRAYSON

Meanwhile Father Riedinger had returned to Grayson, and his first concern on his return was to get Religious as teachers into the parish. His efforts were crowned with success. September 24, 1915, was a "red-letter" day in the history of Grayson, marking as it did the coming of Ursuline Sisters from their motherhouse at Winnipeg. On August 10, 1913, five valiant women, Mothers Dominica, Ambrosia, Ignatia, Gabriela and Alexia had left their motherhouse at Schweidnitz, Silesia, Germany, to take charge of a parish school



Rev. Jos. Schulte, O.M.I.
Pastor — 1936-1941



Rev. H. Kelz, O.M.I.
Pastor — 1947-1950



Rev. B. Ueberberg, O.M.I.
Pastor — 1941-1947,
1950 to the present

in Gregory, South Dakota, U.S.A. As this establishment held no promise for the future, the Sisters left early in July, 1914, to take over St. Joseph's School at Winnipeg. Here they united their forces with those already there — Mother Antonia Hebestreit from Dorsten, Westphalia, two Sisters from Cologne, Mother Angela and Mother Clementia, and a lay sister, Sr. Thekla. From time to time they received additional recruits from Germany. From this foundation with Rev. Mother Ignatia as its first Superior, went forth a little band of courageous nuns to lay the cornerstone of a new foundation at Grayson. Before accepting the offer, Mother Ignatia, accompanied by Mother Clementia, did some preliminary scouting. In Grayson at the time there was the so-called "Mission-House", the headquarters of the Oblate Fathers. Since this house no longer served its original purpose, Father Riedinger offered it to the Sisters under the condition that they open a boarding school, and thus help him in his pastorate. Furthermore, they were to provide the pastor with board and lodging. This gracious offer was readily accepted, and on October 24, 1915, Mother Antonia Klar was sent to Grayson for the instruction and education of the boarders of both sexes, some twelve to thirteen in number. She was joined somewhat later by Sister Cordula who conducted the household. When the Catholic Separate School was moved to its present site, Mother Antonia was engaged as teacher at the school.



**The first St. Mary's Church at Grayson
1907 - 1929**

In the course of the summer of 1916 an addition to the "Mission-House" was built under the direction of Father Riedinger. It consisted of basement which served as chapel and sacristy, a spacious classroom and dormitory on the main floor; yet another dormitory on the second floor; thus providing accommodation for 40 to 50 children; and off the kitchen a large refectory for the children. Up to this time Father Riedinger in accordance with the agreement occupied a suite in the Convent. In December 1918 he moved into the new rectory, the present St. Bernard's Convent.

When on February 5, 1919, the convent at Winnipeg was closed down, all the Sisters who had resided there came to Grayson. The following April Father Riedinger was transferred to Prelate, Saskatchewan. He was accompanied thither by Mother Clementia and Luitgardis, and Sister Thekla, with the intention of founding an independent Convent there, which they did, and which is now a very flourishing Community.

In November 1919 Father Rapp went to Europe to visit his relatives. In the interim Father Plischke, O.M.I., took his place, having come to Grayson in September 1919. Upon Father Rapp's return in 1920, Father Plischke, who had won all hearts both at Grayson and Killaly, was sent by his Superior to Regina where Father H. Boening, O.M.I., Pastor of St. Mary's Church, needed his assistance. Henceforth Father Rapp was alone in Grayson, conducting services at Killaly on alternate Sundays. When there was High Mass at Killaly, Grayson was always favored with an early Mass with "Asperges me" and a short sermon. In fine, Grayson was never without Mass on Sunday.

In the spring of 1921 the Reverend Ursuline Sisters opened a boarding school at Grayson for the purpose of giving the children of this parish as well as outsiders the opportunity of a good preparation for First Holy Communion. Unfortunately poor crops and other adverse conditions enabled but a few children to take advantage of this sterling opportunity. At about the same time, with the permission of the Archbishop, the Mission at Grayson was raised to the status of Motherhouse and Novitiate of the Ursuline foundation in Canada with Mother Ignatia as first Superior and Mistress of Novices.

FIRE!

In the Christmas week of 1921 the little chapel of Mariahilf, about six miles south of Killaly burned down, and with it the first House of God in this neighborhood, built by the German pioneers who had settled round here in the nineties of the last century. First intended as a rectory only, it was later converted into a chapel by adding a sanctuary and a little sacristy. The sanctuary was of stone and masonry, but the sacristy was only a rudely built shack, where wind and rain played havoc.

March 29, 1923, the night from Maundy Thursday to Good Friday, brought the chronicle of the Grayson Convent to an abrupt and sad end. With lightning rapidity a ravaging fire destroyed the Motherhouse; nothing was left erect except the huge chimney which for almost a week after pointed heavenward as a silent reminder of the Giver of all good gifts. All efforts at extinguishing the fire, which had begun at the most out-of-the-way place and in a most mysterious manner, were futile. Thanks to the composure and presence of mind of the good Sisters, no lives were lost. Within a few hours property valued at about \$10,000, the fruit of ten years of untiring labor, became the prey of flames. Instead of rebuilding at Grayson it was decided to establish the motherhouse at Vibank, and so terminated, for the time being, the spiritual endeavours of the Ursulines at Grayson.

Father Rapp was succeeded by Father James Schnersch, O.M.I., who until September 1926 alone shouldered the heavy burden of administering the ever-growing parish and missions still including Killaly. On September 3, 1926, Father J. Seltmann arrived from Spring Lake, Alberta, to take over the pastoral care of St. Mary's. On September

20, Father Schnerch left for the newly-founded St. Paul's College at Winnipeg, conducted by the Oblate Fathers. He was replaced by Father Anton Hermann as curate of St. Mary's and first Pastor of Killaly.

1927 — SILVER JUBILEE OF THE TOWN

Grayson staged a Jubilee picnic and bazaar June 29, 1927. It was indeed a day of festivity and rejoicing. The morning featured a solemn High Mass, while the afternoon was given to merry-making of diverse kinds. During the winter the women and young ladies of the Parish had fashioned some exquisite articles, among which were veritable masterpieces selling at extraordinary prices. Many donations, among them a heifer and a ton of coal, were made. An outstanding feature of the program was to be the afternoon parade of the school children, but the "weather-man" decreed otherwise. A cloudburst of a quarter-hour's duration created havoc on the fair grounds, and might well have cast a cloud of gloom over the entire enterprise had it not been for the Gelowitz Band, which had been in attendance all day striking up many a merry tune to revive spirits. Then as today there was keen competition between Grayson Separate and Columbia Schools, for, in spite of the rain the scheduled game between the two schools was fought out to the credit of the former. Thanks to the zeal, the organization and the relentless efforts of the Committee, the day proved an unprecedented success. The evening, of course, was given to tripping on the light fantastic toe.

This celebration was followed on July 3 by a Day of Thanksgiving for all the graces and blessings of the past twenty-five years. At 10 o'clock there was a solemn High Mass of Thanksgiving at which Rev. J. Seltmann delivered a masterful, heart-warming, patriotic sermon in which he traced the growth of the Catholic Church in the West, emphasizing the fact that the Oblate Fathers were the trail-blazers of this vast prairie land west of the Red River. Giants among these heroes were: Tache, Grandin, Langevin, Pascal, Lacombe. He concluded his panegyric with these stirring words: "We, who are reaping the fruits of these pioneers, are living under a Canadian flag, bearing the inscription, 'Peace, Unity and Justice.'" After the hymn of praise "Holy God" and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament the whole congregation in parade wended its way to the St. Mary's Park adjoining the Church.

Headed by the standard bearers in white, the school children and the band, all the citizens of Grayson in solemn procession approached the open-air "Forum". After "O Canada", Mr. George M. Gelowitz, Reeve, took the platform. First he read the congratulations of the Governor-General, and the Premier of Canada. Then, in well-chosen words, he pictured the development of agriculture in Canada. Amidst tumultuous applause and a lively measure, he made his bow. Two other speakers followed: Mr. McFarlane, C.P.R. Agent, who in bold

strokes sketched the political and educational progress of Canada; and Mr. J. Hubenig, Sr. a pioneer of Grayson, who humorously related some of the experiences of his active life. Both were loudly acclaimed. Now "The King" was intoned, and to the strains of martial music the crowd dispersed.

NEW MISSION CHAPEL — out of the ashes of the old

As related previously, Mariahilf, the pioneer church of "our prairies", was destroyed by fire in 1921. Only mournful ruins were the silent witnesses of the first House of God of our German pioneer farmers. Although the residents had meanwhile become affiliated with the Parish of Killaly, the loyal hearts could not long endure the sad aspects of the ruins, which held so many dear memories for them, and decided to rebuild the church, even if on a smaller scale. A few feet from the Church lies the first cemetery, in which some 160 dear departed are awaiting the General Judgment. Thus the newly erected Church serves as a memorial for our "dear dead" and as a hallowed shrine. Although a simple, modest structure, the new St. Mary's Chapel of Mariahilf is a gem set in the woody, hilly background. It was blessed by Rev. J. Seltmann on the Feast of the Assumption, August 15, 1927. At the solemn High Mass the celebrant, Rev. J. Seltmann, was to be assisted by Rev. F. Pander of Melville as deacon, and Rev. J. Schwebius of Lemberg as subdeacon; but unavoidable circumstances prevented both these Fathers from gracing the solemnity with their benign presence. The celebration was concluded with a little picnic. A goodly number of Catholics from the neighboring parishes of Killaly, Grayson, Melville, Neudorf and Lemberg assisted at the ceremony.

During the same year the cemeteries at Grayson, Mariahilf and Killaly received considerable attention to render them worthy resting places for our deceased of blessed memory. At the expense of much time, effort and sweat the undertaking was accomplished to the satisfaction of all.

A NEW CHURCH FOR GRAYSON

On February 6, 1928, Rev. B. Ueberberg, Provincial of St. Mary's Province, Regina, made his first visitation at Grayson, finding everything in the best of order. Like Father J. Seltmann he bewailed the fact that the Grayson church was much too small for the large congregation, and hoped Father Seltmann would soon find the means to erect a spacious new church. Such, of course, had been Father's heart's desire from the day of his arrival, but he hesitated to begin building until an appreciable building fund had been established. That the people of Grayson, both young and old, too were most anxious to see these hopes realized is attested by the following: on

February 7, Father Provincial had the singular privilege of being guest of honor at a concert staged in Mr. Mayer's Hall by the young ladies and men of the parish to raise funds for the new church. It is said the plays were so superbly rendered, they overshadowed anything of the kind Grayson had ever attempted before. Father Provincial was exuberant in praise of the accomplishments of our young people.

Thanks to everyone's generosity and self-sacrifice, prospects appeared good, and by early 1929 arrangements were well under way with architects, lumber companies, etc. The position of foreman was leased to Mr. Barney Peterson of Earl Grey, while Father himself acted as contractor. On May 10, 1929, began the excavation of the basement, 40' by 119', and the hauling of gravel by local farmers, who did this work free of charge and with a glad good will.

Grayson again portrayed its true colors on June 6, 1927, in the grandiose reception accorded the Rt. Rev. Bishop Charlebois, O.M.I., who had come to confer the Sacrament of Confirmation once again after seven years. As it was an unusually large class, 170 in number, the holy Sacrament was administered in the open air just outside the Church. Thereupon the whole Congregation went in procession to the new Church (in the making) where the Bishop blessed the site and the foundation. In the evening there was a brilliant concert in His Lordship's honor, at the close of which Mr. George Gelowitz, Reeve of the Grayson Municipality, in the name of all the parishioners read a beautifully illuminated Thanksgiving Address, to which the Bishop replied in most cordial terms. The hall was again filled to capacity as all wished to show their affection, reverence and devotion to their spiritual leaders and guides.

DIFFICULTIES

The work on the new church continued during the summer months but as the prospects for a good crop became ever more doubtful, a nervous hesitation became visible, and some thought the work should be halted. But what about the workers? Were they to swell the numbers of the unemployed? No, the work had to be continued. However, on November 6 it came to a dead halt for the simple reason that the funds were exhausted. The basement was completed, the heating system installed, and the rough framework and roof erected and fortified against rain and snow. On December 8, Rev. Thomas Schnersch, Provincial, blessed the basement of the new Church. Henceforth Church services were held in it. Despite the liberality of the people and the fact that they had sponsored many an entertainment for the good of the Church during the summer and fall, there remained a deficit of \$1350, which had to be met by January 1, 1930.

Since October 1929 the prices of farm products had been constantly dropping. In 1930, we, too, were hit by the depression. Yet, despite all obstacles, the building program inched ahead again. On August 2nd, Archbishop McGuigan blessed the cornerstone.

THE NEW ST. MARY'S IS BLESSED

His Grace, Archbishop McGuigan, arrived in Grayson late Tuesday night, July 5, 1932, motoring from Regina — then a long and tiresome journey through the mud. Wednesday, July 6, he celebrated a Pontifical High Mass, assisted by Fathers J. Seltmann and Carrier as Deacons of Honour, Fathers Santha and Ehman as Deacon and Subdeacon of the Mass, and Reverend Dr. P.F. Hughes, Rector of Holy Rosary Cathedral, Regina, as Master of Ceremonies. Following the Mass His Grace blessed the beautiful procathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, assisted by the visiting clergy. The Prelate congratulated priest and people on their accomplishment, recalling the numerous graces received during twenty-five years of Divine Service and love of God in this Parish. (The Parish celebrated the Silver Jubilee of its foundation at the same time.) He urged them to be steadfast in their traditions of loyal devotedness to the Church. In the evening the guests and an immense crowd were treated to a four act play, "Dust of the Earth", in the pioneer church which had previously (1929-30) been converted into St. Mary's Hall. The audience was unanimous in pronouncing the play, with its pathos and laughter, one of the best staged since the Parish hall was put into commission. These entertainments were given on an average of one a month, and undoubtedly did much to raise the cultural and moral tone of the Parish. While providing clean, healthful recreation at little cost, they were a source of revenue to help pay the debt on our church — a very welcome asset in those hard times.

Under the heading: "Parish Hall at Grayson is Prey of Flames", the *Leader Post* of May 27, 1933, brought the following report: "Fire of unknown origin completely destroyed the parish hall of St. Mary's Catholic Church here at 2 o'clock this morning. The fire brigade turned out, but the fire had gained too much headway. Father Seltmann, the parish priest, is absent at Winnipeg at present. Loss is about \$5000, partly covered by insurance."

Already on July 3 began the excavation for the new Cecilia Hall. With lightning rapidity the work progressed. By July the foundation was completed, and the framework begun. October 2 witnessed the formal opening, in the presence of a huge crowd — 500 to 600 — the largest gathering in the history of Grayson according to the "old-timers". A four-act play, made a great hit with the audience.

Since Father Seltmann's health was beginning to fail, his Superiors, out of consideration gave him an assistant in the person of young Father Joseph Heit, who arrived in Grayson on September 4, 1934. April 16, Father Seltmann had a bad attack which left him quite weak. Upon advice of Rev. Father Provincial he was transported by ambulance to Providence Hospital, Moose Jaw.

The doctor's verdict pronounced Father J. Seltmann unable to resume his pastoral duties, hence Rev. Father Provincial, Philip Funke, in collaboration with the new Archbishop, P.J. Monahan,

entrusted the administration of St. Mary's to Rev. Jos. Schulte, O.M.I. the latter arrived at Grayson on September 7, 1936.

One of Father Schulte's first deeds was the purchase of two statues valued at \$260.00 to fill two empty niches on the church front. February 1937 the statues of St. Boniface, Patron of Germany, and St. Donatus, Patron against Lightning and Tempest, were installed. This was the gift of the Young Ladies' Sodality. Not do be outdone in generosity, the C.Y.C. collected \$250.00 for a second church bell.

THE URSULINES RETURN



Rev. Fr. Jos. Schulte, O.M.I. with Sisters Benedicta and Philomena

Perhaps Father Schulte's greatest accomplishment was to bring the Ursulines back to Grayson. Towards the end of August, 1938, two Ursulines of Vibank, Sisters Benedicta and Philomena, arrived, the former to succeed Miss Sadie McFarlane in the Junior Room of the Grayson Separate School, the latter to manage the household. The following year, 1939, they were joined by Mother Veronica who took over the High School, which was opened on August 24 of that year.

On September 12, 1941, Father Joseph Schulte left Grayson for his new parish of St. Aloysius, Allan. He was succeeded by Rev. Bernard Ueberberg, who, with the exception of a three-year term as Provincial, has been our spiritual Father ever since. Father at once set about the completion of the interior of Cecilia Hall which was done with free labor and progressed so rapidly that by Easter Sunday the "newly effected" hall could be opened in presence of a large crowd.

THE END OF A MORTGAGE

The year 1942 brought us a veritable bumper crop — the best within the memory of the pioneers. Father encouraged the people to pay off the debt of somewhat over \$5000 still resting on the church. In thanksgiving to God for the bountiful harvest, they showed themselves generous beyond measure so that by Christmas the necessary funds had been raised. On December 28 a most unusual observance which attracted some 600 spectators took place in Cecilia Hall, namely, the cancellation and destruction of the mortgage on St. Mary's Church. This mortgage had been signed in 1931 by His Excellency, Archbishop McGuigan, Father Joseph Seltsmann, Pastor of Grayson, and the Trus-

tees, Messrs. John Stepan and John Hicke. To the latter fell the honor of burning the mortgage in presence of the many visiting priests and people. In the various addresses thanks were rendered to whomever thanks were due: Father Ueberberg, who by word and example had inspired this spirit of sacrifice; to Father Rapp who instituted the building fund; to Father Seltsmann who directed the erection of the building; to Father Schulte who concentrated on the interior decoration of the church, and the landscaping of the church grounds; and, of course, to the people of the parish, especially the ladies who were ever ready to "feed the hungry and give drink to the thirsty."

Relieved of the parish debt, pastor and flock could turn their minds and means to the furnishing and beautification of our House of God, and every succeeding year brought some improvement to enhance the glory of God and the fervour of the faithful. Thus in 1943 a new tabernacle and altar were installed. The tabernacle, the best that money could procure, is hexagonal in shape with revolving door. It is proof against both fire and theft. A master craftsman in Montreal embellished it with exquisite carvings of wheat and grapes, symbols of bread and wine. The fruit of an entire year's labour, it is admired as a masterpiece of art by visitors from near and far.

In 1944 the former rectory with adjoining property was sold to the Ursuline Sisters to become the present St. Bernard's Convent, and a beautiful new rectory was erected on church property. In thanksgiving for the blessing of an abundant crop, the people contributed most generously to the support of the church, so that the parish income surpassed the \$10,000 mark.

THE GRAYSON SAVINGS AND CREDIT UNION

There is an organization in the parish which merits special mention. It, more than any other community undertaking, testifies to the progressiveness and cooperative spirit of the parishioners. It is the Credit Union.

The Grayson Savings and Credit Union Limited is a Co-operative Society. It was organized on April 11, 1944, in the Cecilia Hall. Mr. A. C. Maclean from the Department of Co-operation and Co-operative Development outlined the operation, management, savings, loans, and the duties of the Board of Directors, the Credit Committee, and the Supervisory Committee of a Credit Union. On that day the following officers were elected:

Hon. Pres. Rev. B. Ueberberg, O.M.I.	Credit Committee Mr. Joe M. Exner
President Mr. Ted Klatt	Mr. Chris. Appell
Vice-President Mr. J. C. Graff	Mr. Jack Lichtenwald
Directors Mr. Joe M. Rieger	Supervisory Committee
Mr. Chris. Ruhr	Mr. Charles Seibel
Mr. John Hicke	Mr. C. Ruhr
Sec. Treas. Mr. George M. Gelowitz	Mr. Donald Hrynewich

In the Grayson Savings and Credit Union Limited there are 255 registered members. Its total assets are approximately \$35,000.00. During the first decade of its existence it made 214 loans totalling \$68,000, and paid its shareholders in dividends \$4,403.90. It has helped many a family in distress and made it convenient for members to practise systematic saving. A true example of cooperative community spirit.

MORE RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

The year 1945 was highlighted by the installation of a fine modern pipe organ in memory of Sgt. George Streisel, R.C.A.F., a son of the parish. It was solemnly blessed on March 19, in the presence of all the clergy of the district and a capacity crowd. Rev. Father W. Merx, O.M.I., of St. Mary's Parish, Regina, preached the festive sermon.

In the year 1946 - 1947, the parishioners donated over \$8,000.00 to the new Oblate College at North Battleford, in gratitude for and appreciation of the splendid work the Oblate Fathers have rendered for their spiritual welfare.

In 1948, Archbishop M. C. O'Neill of Regina paid his first visit to Grayson, and raised ninety-eight of our children to the dignity of soldiers of Christ.

In 1949 to 1950, a new furnace was installed in the church and other important improvements were made.

In 1951, the power line came to Grayson. All buildings had to be re-wired and new motors installed.

In 1953, an addition was made to Cecilia Hall in the form of a new kitchen with modern equipment.

In 1954, Archbishop O'Neill again administered the holy Sacrament of Confirmation, this time to a class of 102. If the number of people approaching the Holy Table can be taken as a norm of the spiritual growth of a parish, certainly Grayson stands second to none in this respect. In the year of our Lord, 1954, the number of Holy Communions received reached the startling figure of 31,000. Nor was this high figure simply an accident, for in the ensuing years that number has been maintained. In this jubilee year perhaps, thanks to the new Communion fasting regulations of our wise, understanding Holy Father, the 31,000 mark may be considerably overreached.

THE CHOIR

People have come to refer to this community as the "musical village of Grayson", and with good reason. Is it any wonder then that St. Mary's church has always enjoyed the rich fullness of a well-trained mixed choir? Parishioners here have seemed always to realize

the beauty that good, devout song and music lend to the liturgy of the Church — hence their love of church music.

For a period of forty years — from 1907 to 1947 — Mr. George M. Gelowitz held the demanding and sometimes thankless position of choir director. Upon retirement he was presented with a specially documented papal blessing and a gold watch, the gift of grateful parishioners. His son, Mr. E. J. Gelowitz, then took over in his father's footsteps and has directed the choir admirably for the past decade.

Nor must we forget the faithful organists who through the years have lent their sizeable share to the choir's accomplishments. As stated previously, the first organist was Mr. George Lepinski. From 1922 to 1925 Mr. Matt Lepinski accompanied the choir, and from 1925 to 1955 (with the exception of some short periods of weeks when Miss Mary Lepinski, the sister of George, played) the official organist was Mrs. J. D. Flegel (nee Elizabeth Gelowitz), daughter of Mr. George M. Gelowitz. St. Mary's present organist is Miss Rita Rieger.

Thus for half a century St. Mary's Parish has been blessed with a fine choir, a choir meriting the thanks and appreciation of the congregation.

FIRST PRIESTS FROM GRAYSON PARISH

This jubilee year of our parish, 1957, will also witness the elevation to the Holy Priesthood of two of Grayson's native sons: Brothers Adam Exner, O.M.I., and Wilfred Rieger, O.M.I. Brother Exner will be ordained in Rome on July 7th, while the date for Brother Rieger's ordination is set for October 5, at St. Charles Scholasticate, Battleford. It is well to consider and thank God for these blessings accruing to a parish when two from within its midst take their places as dispensers of God's mercy. Pray and sacrifice that there be many more generous young men to answer their Divine Master's call. The harvest is indeed great, and the laborers few.

"NEW LOOK"

People about to celebrate their golden jubilee naturally want to look their best for the occasion — new clothes, a sparkling appearance. Now, while St. Mary's Church isn't a person, it too has donned a "new look" for the festive occasion, and for many years to come. Devoutly simple, yet solidly beautiful new pews grace the interior while the recently completed job of redecorating lends a brighter, a more joyful note to the entire atmosphere.

STATISTICS

From the parish records of St. Mary's church we have the following statistics covering the period 1907 - 1957:

Baptisms: 2912; Marriages: 640; Deaths: 416.

CONCLUSION

Growth — spiritual and physical — in St. Mary's Parish, Grayson, has been anything but stagnant over the last half century. Let us sincerely thank God for this. In adoring our Eucharistic Lord and Saviour, in admitting our failings of the past, let us earnestly ask Him to continue blessing our parish, to continue helping us grow, not only in material things, but in things of the spirit as well, so that "through Him and in Him and by Him, is to Thee, God the Father Almighty, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honor and glory."



AD MULTOS AT FELICISSIMOS ANNOS!



**Present sanctuary and altar,
St. Mary's Church**

PART TWO

I. They Came

It was toward the turn of the century that the then Liberal Government, with Sir Wilfred Laurier as helmsman, sent agents to the Old World to make propaganda for Canada, and thus began a wave of immigration unparalleled in the history of our country. Here was a land of promise — deep, fertile soil, plenty of it, to be had almost for the asking. Any male eighteen and over, and any widow with children, could take up 160 acres of virgin soil by paying the nominal fee of ten dollars, provided they promised to build a residence on the land and to cultivate at least ten acres a year. After three years the government granted deeds and title of ownership to those who fulfilled these easy conditions. *What an offer!* Add to this the fact that in the Old Country land was scarce, hence so expensive as to be beyond the reach of the average citizen. Moreover, the practice of compulsory military service in vogue in the militarized countries of Europe at the time was odious to not a few. Under such circumstances, is it any wonder that many of them decided to sell out what small holdings they owned, and emigrate to Canada as long as there was cheap land available and the offer held? And sell out they did. With part of the returns they purchased such valuables as tools of all kinds, kitchen utensils, stove plates and rings, dishes, clothes, bedding, and occasionally even a Bohemian plow — in fine, anything and everything they felt would stand them to the good once they had taken up their homestead. Thus provided, they bade farwell to their native land, in most cases never to see it again.

1896

The year 1896 witnessed the arrival of six families and two bachelors from Galicia, and one family from Bukowina — a total of 44 souls — to constitute the “founding fathers”, so to say, of our community. These were as follows:

John Bruch , 50, five children,	Martin Schoenhoffer , 50 one child,
John Kletchko , 55, four children,	Joseph Michalski , 25, single,
Stan Bulla , 40, three children,	Adam Kunderman , 25, single,
Fred Mansiak , 40, four children	John Hubenig , 45, eight children,
Andreas Rogalski , 35, five children,	

1897

1897 brought the following additions:

Heinrich Exner , 45, five children	Anton Rieger , with one orphan
Anton Exner , 22, single	Jakob Lichtenwald Sr. , 23, single
Anton J. Flegel , 45, four children	

1898

The following year seems to have been fruitful in settlers. It greatly swelled the young growing community, bringing new life and new activity. From early spring till late fall they kept streaming in to found new homes.

Anton Exner , 40, four children	Sebastian Hanoski , 53, five children
John Exner , 40, two children	Anton Ludwar , 50, four children
Joseph G. Flegel , 45, six children	Jakob Ruehr , 30, two children
Anton G. Flegel , 35, four children	Joseph Lang , 40, four children
John Hornung , 50, six children	Caspar Beutel , 50, six children
Joseph Hornung , 25, single	Jakob Dietrich , 40, four children
Frank Hornung , 23, single	John Dietrich , 30, three children
Michael Hornung 20, single	John Fuchs , 50, four children
John Holitzki , 40, six children	George Fuchs , 30, four children .
John Novak , 40, six children	Frank Fuchs , 25, two children
Heinrich Holitzki , 30, three children	Jakob Ludwar , 45, four children
Adam Nestman , 30, three children	John J. Flegel , 50, five children
Wilhelm Hanoski , 50, four children	George Baer , 50, four children

1899

While 1899 witnessed a drop in the number of settlers, it, too, brought its representatives in the following:

Joseph Schlechter , 46	Daniel Flegel , 55, five children
Michael Rieger , 55, four children	Peter Rieger , 50, four children
(Father of Mrs. George M. Gelowitz)	Frank D. Flegel , 20, single

1900

The stream of immigrants continued as indicated below. We cannot vouch for the absolute accuracy of the year of arrival, the ages, or the number of children. In a chronicle of this nature, errors are bound to occur. "To err is human". However, we trust that any survivors who might see these annals will be indulgent and regard only our good will, and as to the deceased, we have no fear of incurring their just wrath.

Anton Ottenbreit , 40, four children	Adam Hornung , 25, two children
Leonard Mayer , 35, four children	George Lang , 25, single
Joseph Neuman , 35, four children	Karl Lang , 28, single
Anton Rieger , 30, two children	John Stepan , 35, four children
Joseph F. Flegel , 35, three children	Andreas Bank , 45, five children
John L. Huber , 35, four children	John Bank , 22, single
Eva Hartman , 55, widow, one child	Frank Bank , 20, single
George Hartman , 25, single	Robert Schultz , 35, two children

1901

Adam Huber , 45, five children	Mathias Huber , 50, four children
Emil Zaleski , 35, four children	John Huber , 30, single
Mathias Gelowitz , 39, six children (Father of George M. Gelowitz)	Michael Huber , 25, single
Joseph Zimmer , 30, three children	Karl Juri , 40, four children
Isidore Zimmer , 25, single	Heinrich Duczek , 35, four children
Karl Zimmer , 20, single	John Duczek , 20, single

1902

Joseph Hicke , 45, five children	Josepha Zimmer , 50, widow with four children
John Hicke , 20, single	Joseph Zimmer , 21, single
Philip Hicke , 18, single	Anton Zimmer , 19, single
Isidore Riese , 35, four children	George Zimmer , 18, single
Theodore Krull , 50	Wenzel Appel , 35, four children
Peter Krull , 25, single	John Ruehr , 50, five children
John Englad , 45, one child	Christian Ruehr , 18, single
Anton Exner , 30, two children	Anton Lenhard , 70, widower
Michael Exner , 23, single	Alexander Lenhard , 35, two children
Stephan Koslowski , 50, four children	George Lenhard , 30, single
Emil Koslowski , 20, single	Rosie Rieger , 60, widow
Paul Stradecki , 38 five children	Joseph Rieger , 35, two children
Ignace Stradecki , 70	Mathias Rieger , 22 single
Wenzel, Stradecki , 35, two children	Isidore Rieger , 20, single
John Zimmer , 30	
Bernard Zimmer , 23, single	

1903

George Zimmer , 35, four children	Michael Rieger, Jr. , 30, two children
Nicholas Muntain , 30, two children	Anton Stradecki , 45, three children
George Lazar , 50, two children	Joseph Stradecki , 20, single
Alexander Lazar , 20, single	Karl Stradecki , 18, single
Michael Batza , 35, three children	Ferdinand Stradecki , 16, single
Joseph Baumgartner , 50, 2 children	

1906

Frank Ottenbreit , 35, four children	Jakob Kopetzki Jr. , 22, single
Jakob Kopetzki , 45, three children	

1910

Wilhelm Joerissen , 30, single	Joseph Wihlidal , 20, single
George Fialkofski , 45, four children	

1912

Anton Jakubowski , 40, four children	George G. Gelowitz , 35, four children
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1913

Joseph K. Gelowitz , 16, single	Andreas Joerissen , 55,
Joseph I. Hornung , 17, single	Joseph Ottenkirchen , 35 single

1917

Jakob Lichtenwald , 45, five children	Jakob Lichtenwald Jr. 20. single
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1918

Max von Amerungen , 35, 2 children	Hans Wischermann , 30,
Karl Landschütz , 35, single	widower with one child

The year 1928 brought Mr. Peter Streifel, 35, with three children. Though he could not be called an immigrant since he had previously been residing at Fox Valley, nevertheless he deserves special mention here. His sparkling wit and rollicking sense of humor is an invaluable asset to our community.

As might be expected, almost all of these early settlers have passed away, most of them in death, but some by moving to neighboring villages or to more remote parts of the continent. Let it be mentioned in passing that only five single persons and one married person returned to their homeland to stay, and they lived to regret the step. A few have been spared us to this Jubilee, to tell their stirring tale of adventure and endeavor.

THE NEW LAND

On arriving at Quebec or Halifax, the settlers were welcomed by immigration officers who put them through the ordinary red tape. Without any further delay they made the necessary preparations for the second stage of the journey to their new home. To reduce cost to a minimum, since all had to count their pennies, (the total fare was about \$70.00 for adults and \$35.00 for children over five — this included board on the ship but not on the train) they purchased a sufficient supply of edibles — bread, bacon, cheese, and, of course, again a bountiful supply of garlic and that indispensable gallon of grog. The more ambitious also secured German-English dictionaries. Thus fortified both in body and mind, they boarded special immigrant trains westward bound. The men travelled in freight cars which were loaded with their household effects. The women and children came in colonist cars attached to the same train. Their destination: Grenfell, Assiniboia, now Saskatchewan, this being the town nearest to their goal.

The party including Mrs. Elizabeth Rieger and her husband, the late Anton Rieger, had quite an experience. As they pulled out of Halifax a gigantic forest fire was raging on either side of the track. The billows of smoke converted day into night, while the heat was so intense the glass panes became too hot to touch. Through these pillars of smoke and flame the train raced at a frightening speed.

As they neared the prairies they had their first glimpse of the little prairie gophers which sat up straight to watch the intruders, wondering be they friend or foe. Even the coyotes paused in their lazy lope across the prairie for a cursory glance. It was this train trip, too, that presented them their first view of a glorious prairie sunset, all crimson and gold. Swiftly it changed. Far to the west, behind the rim of the flat earth, the round sun sank out of sight, and the darkness crept slowly over the land. At home darkness came early and swiftly. Here the light faded into a long twilight.

This part of the journey lasted four days and four nights. At Grenfell some were met by friends who had preceded them; others less fortunate had to hire a livery team to take them to Mariahilf, a Post Office thirty miles north of Grenfell. In either case, the newcomers almost immediately loaded their supplies on horse or ox-drawn wagons and set off on the last lap of their journey — and the most arduous! The only roads were rough, winding prairie trails. Wet weather made mudholes where the wagons sank to the axles. Finally the weary travellers reached the site where their new homes were to be.

II. They Saw

They saw! What did the earliest settlers see on their arrival? No inhabitants of any kind — not even Red Men as these had moved to better hunting grounds. Sixty percent of the area was bare prairie, twenty percent bush, and twenty percent sloughs, one quarter filled with water and the rest lush hay in summer. Stones of enormous size were as numerous as if they had been seeded. Indeed, of one settler it was said in Regina that he would soon come back, as at Mariahilf people had to crawl on hand and foot to cross the hills and stones. But even the stones they put to good use. The bush supplied building material for the first houses, barns, granaries, etc. The poles were only two to three inches thick, and twelve to sixteen feet long. In the valleys there was heavier bush, four to ten inches in diameter, and twenty to thirty feet long. How different the face of the earth appeared from the beautiful native land they had left behind! And yet they tell us, especially those who arrived in late spring or early summer, that everything looked so bright and fresh as if it had been newly created. They loved the wide open spaces which gave them a feeling of freedom and security. The birds sang more sweetly, the sun shone more brilliantly, the flowers bloomed more profusely, the grass was greener, the sky was bluer, the animals were more frisky — in fine, they felt they were being given a new lease on life.

III. They Conquered

After a day's rest at a friend's or relative's they sallied forth in search of a homestead. When they found a pleasant location, they applied to the Registrar of the Land Title Office at Moosomin, including the fee of \$10.00 and inscribing the number of the quarter section they intended to call "mine". If it was still free they got their receipt and were happy — their search was over. Now they were to occupy the farm, but as yet only the adult men folk and the strong girls fifteen years and over.

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

First the boundary lines of the section had to be drawn, so as not to build on another man's farm or on the boundary line. At the north-east corner of every section there was an iron post on which was stamped the number of the section. The other three corner posts were of wood. For their yard they selected elevated ground with a bush to the north of it for shelter. Here they excavated a hole 24' by 30' or 40', and five feet deep, made a roof of poles placed close together, thatched it with hay or straw, and finally covered it with sod. This served as a provisional dwelling place for the family until a more suitable place could be built. Out of clay they made their own kitchen range with a huge oven, for they specialized in home-made bread. For the top of the stove they used the plates and rings they had brought from Austria. Now they were ready to fetch the rest of the family to view the "palatial" living quarters. Primitive as it was, to them it spelled "home", and they were content.

The furnishings were equally crude. The first beds were made of poles. Four bedposts were driven into the ground, cross pieces nailed to the posts at the head and foot ends. Then other poles were placed lengthwise and fastened to the cross bars to serve as a "spring". Old sacks were filled with prairie hay and the mattresses were ready to be placed on top of the "wooden springs". Tables too were fashioned in much the same manner, but instead of poles, boards were nailed to the cross pieces, and the table was ready for the housewife to knead her dough. In the clay oven fire was made, using logs as fuel. When the clay bricks were white-hot the embers were removed, and the well-formed loaves shoved in. Within an hour and a half the bread was ready, and what bread it was! Far more palatable than what we bake nowadays.

Next the "boss" went to buy a yoke of oxen or a team of horses, a few pigs, poultry, and a cow or two to provide milk and cheese for home consumption and butter for the market. A yoke of oxen cost from \$150.00 to \$175.00, a team of horses \$250.00 to \$300.00; six-week old pigs \$2.50 to \$3.00 a pair; hens 50¢ to 75¢ each. All this was mostly bought on credit, or ten percent cash and ninety percent credit. The first year only about ten to twenty acres of land were broken, as they still had to build the first permanent house.

NEW HOMES ON THE PRAIRIES

When a new family arrived, building a house was always the first task. The few houses built of lumber were covered with tar paper to keep out the cold. Those who lived in a wooded country built houses of logs, with sod or thatched roofs. Many made their first homes entirely of sod. These were always cheaper than wood houses, cooler in summer and warmer in winter. In the case of the Grayson pioneers the house was usually 14' by 26' or 32', built with logs fashioned



**A typical pioneer home in the Grayson district
(Picture taken in 1912 at the home of Karl Zimmer)**

and piled one on top of the other and fastened with wooden pegs one inch in diameter and ten to twelve inches long. When the logs were seasoned, it was plastered both inside and out. The plaster used for this purpose was concocted by themselves in a most unique manner. After excavating a sufficiently large hole they filled it with clayey soil mixed with chaff. Over this they poured an amount of water. Then the human mixing-machine was put to work. Sometimes they wore rubber boots, but more often they went into it with their bare feet, and worked the mixture until it was the desired consistency. Usually it was "flavored" with a quantity of animal compost, and was then ready for application. A second coat was given after the first was dry. Finally it was whitewashed both inside and out. Blue corners or some other form of trimming was added. In most cases the roof was of sod. Only a few could afford shingle roofs.

These sod roofs were very heavy, and in at least one case on record a great calamity might have befallen in consequence. This housewife was preparing to bake bread. She had already kneaded the dough and was about to form the loaves when one of the corner posts gave way under the heavy load. Down came the roof, and the good woman was trapped under it with her head in the bread pan. Fortunately her husband who was working nearby, noticed the roofless house and hastened to her rescue. Long after she bore the marks of her adventure, and everyone eyed sod roofs with awe and suspicion.

PIONEER COOPERATION — THE “BEE”

All this was accomplished in an incredibly short time, of course not by the one family working alone but through the organization of a “bee”. Once the site for the new home had been chosen, all the neighbors, usually sixteen to twenty in number, swarmed round to lend a helping hand. These Austrians coming from a land of music and melody, were extremely fond of singing, and so the work progressed merrily in time to the music. This merriment was greatly enhanced by liberal draughts, this time of *Canadian* nectar, of which these bees could never get their fill. And as soon as the house was habitable the family, like the chambered nautilus, entered the new shell, leaving the old shelter for the livestock.

As money was scarce every able-bodied man, woman and child had to help earn a living. Children eight years and over hired out to older settlers at two to four dollars a month for herding cattle as there were no fences in those days. At twelve they were expected to help with the regular farm work. Men carted freight for their neighbors, and in this way earned enough to tide over until they had wheat to sell.

Food was simple but nourishing. Breakfast usually consisted of porridge and milk or coffee (eggs were as yet a luxury, though later on when they began raising their own poultry these became a common item of diet). The main meal was a sumptuous two-course affair — soup followed by some form of wild meat. At lunch-time, potatoes, milk, and cheese or wheatlets graced the table. For the first winter two families usually bought and shared one pig of 200 pounds. The following years they raised their own pigs, chickens, ducks, geese, and also dairy cows to supply milk and cream. Meat was preserved in salt brine. For the sake of variety the pioneers shot rabbits, prairie chickens, wild ducks and geese. Wild fruit was abundant. People seldom made the long journey to town for groceries — they learned to make the best of what they had.

GRAYSON GETS ITS NAME

One of the early decisions was the choice of a name for the budding community. Just by whom it was selected and why, we have been unable to ascertain, but we are told that at first our community was called “Nieven”. Only when the C.P.R. came through was it renamed after a construction contractor, Grayson, a name it has borne ever since.

Transportation was quite a problem in those early days. The only roads then were prairie trails, bad enough at any time but literally impassable in wet weather. The nearest town, Grenfell, was some 30 to 35 miles to the southwest. To make the round-trip by ox-team took all of two days. The use of horses shortened the time considerably. Ordinarily the trip was made but once a month to purchase the

absolutely necessary groceries — sugar, salt, porridge, yeast, tea and coffee — but in harvest-time it had to be covered once a week with 18 to 20 two-bushel bags of wheat per load, selling at from 30¢ to 50¢ a bushel. The farmers gristed their own wheat for flour, wheatlets and shorts.

On one occasion two farmers set out for Grenfell with a few bags of wheat, some eggs and some butter intending to exchange these products for the much-needed groceries. While crossing a certain hill they called "snake hill" the sleigh upset, the bags of wheat burst open, the eggs were scrambled, and the butter rolled in the snow. Needless to say, they had to turn back without groceries. At another time, another farmer, Mr. Frank Dean, was returning from Grenfell to Mariahilf. This was in the spring of the year after the heavy snows had melted and streams were swollen torrents. As the bridge across the Qu'Appelle Valley was under water, he couldn't see it, missed the bridge, and waton and horses went tumbling into the rushing waters. Mr. Dean escaped with his life, but was poorer by a fine team of horses.

ROSES AND THORNS

"Troubles never come single spy, but in battalions!" Perhaps more than anyone else, our pioneers experienced the truth of this saying. In addition to the hardships we have already mentioned, such as back-breaking labor, long hours, low wages, great distances to be travelled often on foot, trackless wastes, lack of medical aid, etc., there were countless others, not the least among which was loneliness. In the Mother Country whence they came the farmers lived in villages or colonies, and farmed from there. Here they were scattered far and wide over the seemingly endless prairie with the nearest neighbor miles away. This was especially trying in winter when they were sometimes snowbound for weeks on end. After all, man is by nature gregarious, and to be thus isolated from his fellow humans cannot but have a serious psychological effect. In fact, we are told that this very loneliness was the cause of not a few cases of insanity on the vast plains of the West.

HARSH CLIMATIC EXTREMES

Then there was the inclement weather. Accustomed as they were to a placid climate, our extremes of climate must have cut them to the quick. Winter brought not only the icy cold and nipping frost but also those blinding blizzards which sometimes raged for a fortnight without abatement. Snowbanks swirled up high enough to completely bury their tiny shacks. Indeed it happened that others drove over top of them without knowing there was someone living there. Great was the distress of anyone trapped unprepared. Time and again cattle starved to death, while the people suffered hunger and cold for want

of food and fuel. Tunnels were dug, one from the house to the barn and a second to the well. Thus the early pioneers led subterranean lives in hideouts or blackouts until the storm subsided, and they were able to ascend to the air and the sun.

If winter was severe, summer was no less so. Now day after day the scorching sun beat down relentlessly out of a cloudless sky. Under the intense heat all life seemed to ebb away. But summer also brought the hail and the searing winds, and above all the insect plagues, especially the mosquitoes. These had absolutely no consideration for either beast or man. To keep them from molesting the poor dumb animals while at work, the farmers hung smudge-pots from the oxen's necks — small relief, but welcome just the same.

PRAIRIE FIRE

With the coming of autumn the summer's heat lessened, but then there were the dangers of early frosts and the much-dreaded prairie fires. Prairie fire! That was an alarm that roused everyone to action. Tubs were filled with water and sacks dipped in. The farmers left their work in the fields and rushed to the scene to plow furrows to serve as a fireguard. The sky grew darker with every minute, and through the billows of smoke you could see the red monster licking up everything in its path. Wild animals fled in terror, while overhead thousands of birds screamed with the screaming wind. Men and women ran back and forth fighting that fire. The men went along the furrows setting fire to the grass on the side away from the buildings and the crops; the women followed with wet sacks beating at the flames that tried to cross the furrow. These prairie fires were a yearly occurrence, but thanks to their cooperation, the settlers usually gained the mastery over them; occasionally, however, not before considerable damage had been done, such as the demolition of hay, oat sheaves, granaries, and the like. Always they left in their wake air that smelled scorched, and a prairie burned naked and black, with threads of smoke rising from it here and there, and ashes that blew on the wind.

CROP FAILURE

Closely associated with the weather conditions was another hazard, namely that of crop failures. To see a fine standing crop, the fruit of months of toil and sweat, wiped out in a few minutes by a pelting hailstorm; or overnight by an early autumn frost; or withering from day to day because of heat or lack of rain; or being devoured by grasshoppers which came in such hordes as to obscure the sun; or being drowned by excessive moisture — calamities such as these must have been most disheartening, and would test the endurance of even the most stout-hearted almost to the breaking point. Would that to offset these obstacles they'd have had at least some of the amenities of life! But even these were denied them. Everything was strange to them —

the language, the customs, the laws. And to top it all off, they were deprived even of the spiritual consolations of the Church, since the visits of the priests were few and far between. But they had been schooled well in that all-important life lesson of undaunted courage and perseverance in the face of difficulties and discouragement. They had come to do battle and did just that. These heroic men and women would have considered it dishonorable to go about with downcast mien and drooping shoulders as if "searching forever for their noble fathers in the dust". They screwed their courage to the sticking point and triumphed. They conquered, make no mistake. They conquered by dint of sheer courage and steadfast faith. ● ●



The backbone of pioneer farming — real horsepower

PART THREE

Cultural Development

"You who have dreams in your hearts, if you act, they will come true."

In a sense the pioneers of the Grayson district were seers, visionaries, entertaining dreams of better, happier days, not so much for themselves as for their descendants. Sensing keenly the lack of an education, and realizing its utmost importance, they soon turned to the organizing of school districts to provide for their progeny the educational opportunities which they so dearly prized but so sadly wanted.

GRAYSON PUBLIC SCHOOL

The first school district to be organized was the Grayson Public School District, Number 1274, with Messrs. Hugh Smith, Jack C. Stewart, and John M. Huber as the first Board of Trustees. Grayson Public School was built in May, 1906. Hewn of "prairie stone", it measures 24' by 36'. The original attendance was about thirty pupils ranging from Grades One to Eight. Though the building still stands and is in good condition — a tribute to the permanency of the builder's art — it has not been in operation since 1950 because of lack of numbers.

GELOWITZ SCHOOL

The following year, 1907, two more school districts were organized. Gelowitz School, named after Mr. Mathias Gelowitz, was built five miles west and one mile north of Grayson. It is also a stone building, 28' by 41', built by Mr. Hauer, a skilled carpenter. The masonry was done by Messrs. Kasper Beutel and George Bernhard. The first trustees were Messrs. Mathias Gelowitz, John Stepan, and George M. Gelowitz. When this school opened in the fall of 1907, there were 35 pupils in attendance. The first teacher was Mr. Arthur Tapscott.

FLEGEL SCHOOL

The other School built in 1907 was Flegel School situated nine miles southwest of Grayson. It too is of stone. The first trustees were Messrs. Daniel Flegel (whose name it bears), Adam Hornung and Casper Schramm. Mr. Frank Pander (later the Rev. Father Frank Pander, who is at present living in retirement at Candiack) was the first teacher in this school.

COLUMBIA SCHOOL

In 1911 Columbia School District was organized eight miles south and one mile west of Grayson. Of frame construction, it had an original enrolment of forty pupils, and has had a rather heavy enrolment ever since. The first trustees were Messrs. Wenzel Stradecki, Joseph Rieger, and J. Demar. Rev. M. J. Kasper was the first secretary.

GRAYSON SEPARATE SCHOOL

The Grayson R.C. Separate School District, Number 4, was not organized until 1913, and might not have come into being when it did, had not the Catholic element in the Grayson Public School District clung to the "Faith of their Fathers" as tenaciously as they did. Cherishing their Catholic Faith as the most priceless treasure bequeathed to them, they wished to see it transplanted into the minds and hearts of their offspring. As they were in the minority in the Public School, they could not persuade the non-Catholic trustees to permit the imparting of religious instructions in the school. Consequently, at the cost of tremendous sacrifice to themselves, they requested and received the permission to organize a Catholic Separate School District. As this is the School District we are mainly concerned with here, it shall be treated at greater length.

The Ottenhouse Roman Catholic Separate School District Number 4, is in the Melville South Superintendency, which at present is under the jurisdiction of Superintendent R. C. Moir. It was built on the S.W. ¼ of Section 16, Township 20, Range 5, West of the 2nd Meridian, where two acres of land for the purpose of a school site were purchased from Mr. John Ducek. It was a one-room frame building, 24' by 40', having as first Board of Trustees Messrs. Anton Loster, Chairman, Christian Ruhr, Secretary-Treasurer, and Isidore Riess, Trustee. The school opened on March 15, 1914, with fifteen children in attendance. The first teacher was Mr. Wenzel Holitzki.

On November 23, 1915, a special ratepayers' meeting was called for the purpose of taking a vote on the question of moving the Ottenhouse School from the location it had hitherto occupied to the two acres to be purchased from the Oblate Fathers in the vicinity of the Church. Of 27 votes cast, 26 favored the motion. Immediately the Secretary was instructed to notify the Department of Education of the outcome of the plebiscite. The response was in accordance with their expressed wish, and forthwith measures were taken towards its transfer to its present site: Lot 6, Block 17, in the village of Grayson. This occurred in July, 1916.

THE URSULINE SISTERS

A milestone in the history of Grayson was the coming to Grayson in 1916 of the Ursuline Sisters from their Motherhouse in Winnipeg. This event was treated more fully in connection with the Church in the first chapter. At a meeting of the Board on February 22, 1916, it was unanimously agreed to engage Rev. Mother Antonia, O.S.U. (née Agnes Klar) as teacher. At the same meeting a motion was carried to request the Department of Education to change the name of the District from *Ottenhouse* to *Grayson Roman Catholic Separate*. In 1922 the Catholic Separate School was rebuilt, and one room, 40' by 28', with concrete foundation, full basement and cloakroom was added.

DISASTER

On March 29, 1923, the home of the Ursuline Sisters was razed to the ground by fire, thus ending for the time being their activities in Grayson. True, the teaching sisters who were on the staff remained at their posts until the close of that term, but were then recalled, whereupon the education of the Grayson youth, at least for the next few years, once again passed entirely into the hands of secular teachers.

A special meeting of the ratepayers was summoned on September 15, 1923, to decide the question of teaching Grade IX. The proposal was unanimously endorsed.

NIGHT SCHOOL

A proof of the progressiveness and ambition of the citizens is the fact that at a special meeting of the Board, Messrs. John Ducek, Christian Ruhr. and Rev. Jas. Schnersch, O.M.I., it was proposed by Father Jas. Schnersch to open night school for grown-ups.

THE URSULINES RETURN — A HIGH SCHOOL FOR GRAYSON

Thanks to the indefatigable efforts of Rev. Jos. Schulte, O.M.I., the Ursuline Sisters returned to Grayson in the fall of 1938 upon the request of the local School Board. Rev. Mother Benedicta took over the Junior Room, while Mr. H. J. Ducek continued in the Senior Room.

Up to this stage the people of Grayson who desired a higher education for their boys and girls had been compelled to send them to neighboring high schools or colleges. However, by now they felt that the time had come to open a local High School. Accordingly, communications began with the Ursulines at Vibank concerning a High School teacher, and in the fall of 1939 a third room, the High School Room, was opened in the old Co-op Store with Rev. Mother Veronica as the first Principal.

As the enrolment was steadily increasing, the three rooms became overcrowded, and the need for an addition to the school became imminent. In 1946 - 47 an addition, 48' by 40', was constructed and par-



Taken in the first classroom of the Grayson Roman Catholic School. From left to right, front row to back: Jack Weishaupt, Henry Duczek, Charlie Mann, John Ruhr, Bill McFarlane, Sadie McFarlane, Sophie Beisig, Marie Heinkel, Mary Ruhr

tioned into two rooms. One served as the High School, which was transferred thither from the Co-op Store, the other was officially opened in the fall of 1947 as the fourth classroom.

By 1953 the congestion had again become disconcerting, and space was required to catch the overflow. This time, however, the pressure was relieved not by adding another annex but by erecting a separate one-room frame building with full basement on the school grounds at the cost of \$9000. This brings the number of rooms in operation to five, the staff consisting of four religious teachers and one layman, Mr. H. J. Duczek.

EDUCATION FOR LIFE

So much for the material and intellectual growth and development, but education implies much more. Education is supposed to develop character, to show the way to get the most out of life in the right way. It is supposed to develop a strong sense of social and moral responsibility in the scholar that will adequately fit him for the exigencies of life. It is supposed to be a training in self-discipline, concentration of the mind, and forceful application of the will. Our young

people must not only be taught the required subject matter, and how to apply this newly acquired knowledge in the pursuit of true happiness, but must also be taught what true happiness is, and where and how it can be found. True education gives children resources that will endure as long as life lasts. It will instil in them habits that will help their character improve as life progresses. It will implant in them attitudes that will make life more dignified and meaningful.

Needless to say, the accomplishment of these exalted aims requires considerably more than a suitable building adequately furnished. First and foremost among these requirements is capable and dedicated teachers. Mindful of their serious responsibilities in matters educational, the Boards have always striven to engage the very best teachers available as models for their children, and these teachers have rendered invaluable services to the district over the years. As we have seen before, the Trustees always placed great emphasis on providing religious instruction for their children. Besides the half hour daily devoted to this duty, a two-week Religious Vacation School is conducted every summer, which serves as an ideal preparation for the successive First Communion and Confirmation classes.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARTS

Moreover, the development of a sense for the Good, the True, and the Beautiful has always occupied a prominent place on our program of study. Such subjects as art, music and drama lend themselves well to the accomplishment of this end. The annual Christmas concert of musical and dramatic productions has always been an eagerly anticipated event. In recent years, music festivals, drama festivals, and oratorical contests have been inaugurated, and are stimulating keen interest and competition in these fields. Some plays that have been presented with more than passing success are *Joint Owners in Spain*, *The Stolen Prince*, *Wings of Darkness*, and *The Dummy*. The last-named was especially well-received by the audience and highly commended by the adjudicator. The annual Field and Track Meet held on both a Local and a Superintendency basis tends to the physical and social development of our children.

Convinced that "things seen are mightier than things heard", to provide audio-visual facilities, the Board purchased in 1951 a Victor Projector and screen from General Film, Regina. The School also boasts the possession of two radio-record players and one radio, which enables all the classes to participate in the "Young Saskatchewan Listens" programs. All this reflects credit on the successive Boards whose primary objective has ever been our advancement and well-being.

No one will deny that it is a colossal undertaking to instruct others unto justice and learning, and so we wish to pay tribute here to the men and women who had the courage to shoulder this stupendous responsibility, and the foresight to carry the task through to success. Our sincere thanks to the teachers, past and present. ● ●

Our Teachers

1914 – One Room – 1922

Mr. Wenzel Holitzki	Miss Mary M. Campbell
Rev. Mother M. Antonia, O.S.U.	Miss MacDonald

1922 – Two Rooms – 1939

Miss Annie T. Cameron	Miss Anna Dobesh
Miss Cecilia Beaton	Miss Mary M. Sheehan
Mr. J. C. Geis	Miss Helen M. Rankin
Miss C. S. McFarlane	Miss Virginia MacLean
Rev. Mother M. Benedicta, O.S.U.	Mr. G. A. Passler
Miss Evelyn G. B. Bracken	Mr. Henry J. Duczek
Miss Mary E. Dobesh	

1939 – Three Rooms – 1947

Rev. Mother M. Benedicta, O.S.U.	Rev. Mother M. Canisia, O.S.U.
Rev. Mother M. Magdalene, O.S.U.	Rev. Mother M. Veronica, O.S.U.
Rev. Mother M. Augustine, O.S.U.	Principal
Mr. Henry J. Duczek	

1947 – Four Rooms – 1953

Rev. Mother M. Clara, O.S.U.	Rev. Mother M. Canisia, O.S.U.
Rev. Mother M. Alphonse, O.S.U.	Principal
Rev. Mother M. Magdalene, O.S.U.	Rev. Mother M. Theresa, O.S.U.
Rev. Mother M. Aloysia, O.S.U.	Principal
Rev. Mother M. Francis, O.S.U.	Mr. Henry J. Duczek
Rev. Mother M. Cecilia, O.S.U.	

1953 – Five Rooms – 1957

Rev. Mother M. Agnes, O.S.U.	Rev. Mother M. Theresa, O.S.U.
Rev. Mother M. Alphonse, O.S.U.	Principal
Rev. Mother M. Berchmana, O.S.U.	Mr. Henry J. Duczek
Rev. Mother M. Lucy, O.S.U.	

PART FOUR

Bouquets

THE URSULINE SISTERS

This Golden Jubilee Souvenir booklet gives us an opportunity to express our thanks and appreciation to the Reverend Ursuline Sisters for the splendid work they have done in helping to build up Grayson parish. With a spirit of faith and sacrifice did they enlighten our children not only in secular knowledge but also with the truth of divine revelation. The great numbers of graduates from Grayson Separate School gratefully acknowledge the formation they have received from them. The Sisters are also in charge of the singing and the prayers the children say in common during the holy sacrifice of the Mass. Besides all this they take care of the Sacristy, the Altar and the Sanctuary. If we find everything shining in the sanctuary and the Altar beautifully decorated it is the work of the good Sisters. We thank them for their devotion and magnanimity.

RELIGIOUS VOCATIONS FROM GRAYSON PARISH:

Gertrud Flegel, Sister Sabina O.S.B.; Magdalena Lepinski, Sister St. Joseph O.S.B.; Mary Ruhr, Mother Teresita; Rose Ruhr, Mother Elva (both are Loretto Sisters); Mary Stradecki, Mother M. Boniface O.S.B.; Mathilda Kreiser, Sister Theresa of Our Lady of the Missions.

Six miles north of Grayson there lives the splendid Catholic family of John Barilla who emigrated from Hungary. Five daughters from this family have entered the sisterhood. This is so extraordinary that we wish to mention their names in this Jubilee souvenir.

Juliana, Sister Juliana O.P.; Elizabeth, Sister John Evangelist O.P.; Anna, Sister Mary Stephen O.P.; Helen, Sister Blonda, and Theresa, Sister Rhoda (both are Sisters of Social Service).

HONOUR ROLL

Sons of Grayson Who Served in the Armed Services

OUR DEAD

Streisel, George, Sgt. R.C.A.F.

Appel, Adam
Beisig, Jacob
Bogdan, George
Bogdan, John
Duczek, Henry
Exner, Adolf
Exner, Anton
Exner, George
Exner, William
Flegel, Adam
Flegel, Joseph
Flegel, William
Gyug, Alexander
Gyug, Joseph
Gelowitz, Anton
Gelowitz, Edward
Grechulk, Michael
Hameliuk, Nicholas
Hicke, John
Hicke, Michael
Hoedel, Lawrence

Hornung, August
Hornung, Daniel
Hornung, Joseph
Huber Jacob
Huber, Martin
Joerissen, Andrew
Kopetski, Jacob
Koslowski, Mathias
Kruppi, Alois
Kruppi, Daniel
Lang, Joseph
Lepinski, Adam
Lepinski, Paul
Lichtenwald, Otto
Lichtenwald, Wilfred
Materi, Edward
Michalski, Henry
Morhart, Jacob
Neuman, Anton
Neuman, John
Ottenbreit, Adam

Ottenbreit, John
Ottenbreit, Michael
Rieger, Christian
Rieger, Charles
Ruhr, Anton
Ruhr, Frank
Ruhr, John
Ruhr, Mathew
Scheitel, John
Schlechter, Joseph
Stepan, George
Stepan, John
Stradeski, John
Stradeski, Joseph
Streisel, John
Weishaupt, Anton
Weishaupt, Isidore
Weishaupt, Jacob
Zimmer, Frank
Wihlidal, George
Zimmer, Isidore

God does not let Himself be outdone in generosity. Of those dear ones we offered Him, He gave back to us all, save one. The people of St. Mary's Parish, Grayson, showed themselves generous to the utmost, not only by sacrificing their sons but also by responding almost lavishly whenever a call for charities came our way. In reward, God lovingly watched over our young men, and restored them to our hearts and our homes, safe and unharmed. On their return a "Welcome Home Banquet" was tendered them, at which an Honor Roll was unveiled. As a thanksgiving offering and at the same time a memorial to George Streisel, a beautiful pipe organ was installed in St. Mary's Church. Thus did the people of Grayson show their love, their undying loyalty, and their devotion to their country, their King and their God! ● ●

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